

The Thriving Quotient: A New Vision for Student Success



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What does a “thriving” student look like?

Approaches to Student Success



- Behaviors that lead to learning outcomes
- Institutional supports for engagement
- Programs and services
- Entering student characteristics predictive of success
- **Individual motivation and psychological processes that lead to engagement behaviors**



Positive Psychology

The Fulfilled Individual
The Thriving Community

Conceptual Framework

Flourishing =
Emotional Vitality
+
Positive Functioning

(Keyes, 2002, 2003; Keyes & Haidt, 2003)

Definition of Flourishing

Rising to meet life's challenges

Involved in healthy relationships

Engaged and productive

Looking beyond oneself to the greater good of others

(Keyes & Haidt, 2003)

Flourishing College Students



- Flourishing is independent of gender, parent educational attainment, or academic achievement.
- Measures of student engagement are predictive of flourishing.
 - Academic challenge
 - Active/collaborative learning
 - Enriching educational experiences
 - Supportive campus environment

(Ambler, 2006)

Bean & Eaton's (2000) Model of Student Persistence

- Psychological processes that promote academic and social integration and contribute to student persistence:
 - Attitudes → behavior
 - Coping mechanisms (approach-avoidance)
 - Self-efficacy
 - Locus of control/attributions
- **Students who persist are those who are most able to interact effectively within the campus environment in ways that strengthen their self-efficacy and control**

Why “Thriving”?



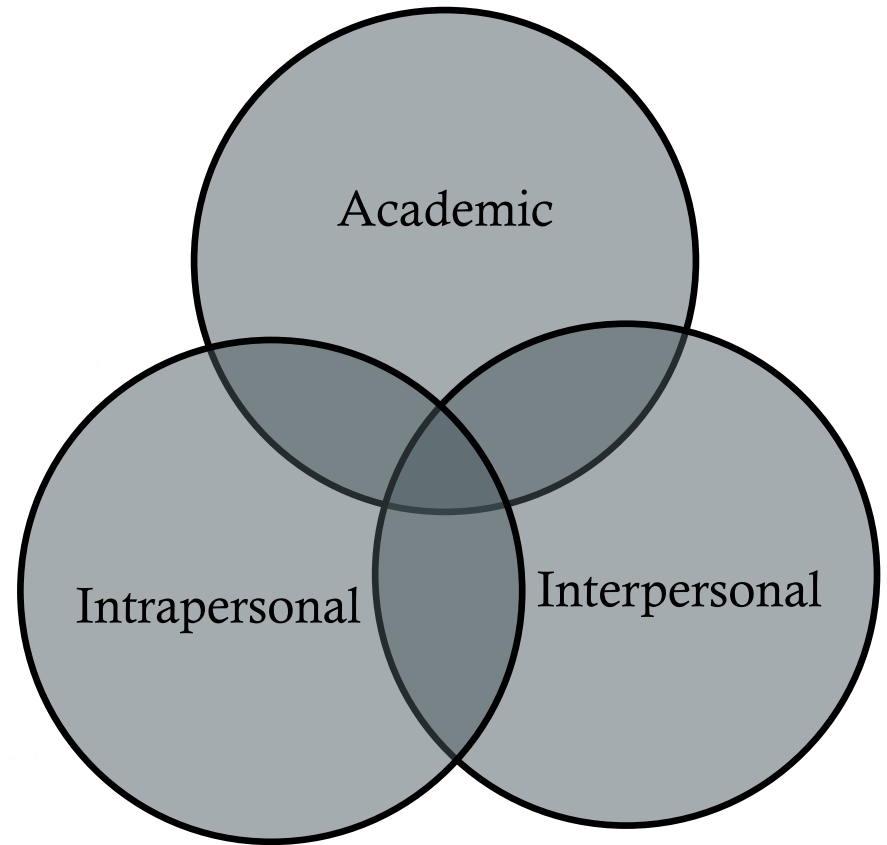
Goes beyond psychological well-being
inherent in flourishing

More holistic construct that adds

- Engaged learning and academic success
- Citizenship and openness to diversity



THRIVING



Criteria for Including a Construct

Measurable

Empirically connected to student
success

Malleable (state vs. trait)

Interventions make a difference

The Thriving Quotient (TQ)

- TQ was constructed from public domain instruments with proven validity and reliability that were adapted for college students after input from student focus groups
- 25-item instrument with responses ranging on a 6-point Likert-type scale of *1=strongly agree* to *6 = strongly disagree*
- Coefficient alpha = .89

The Thriving Quotient

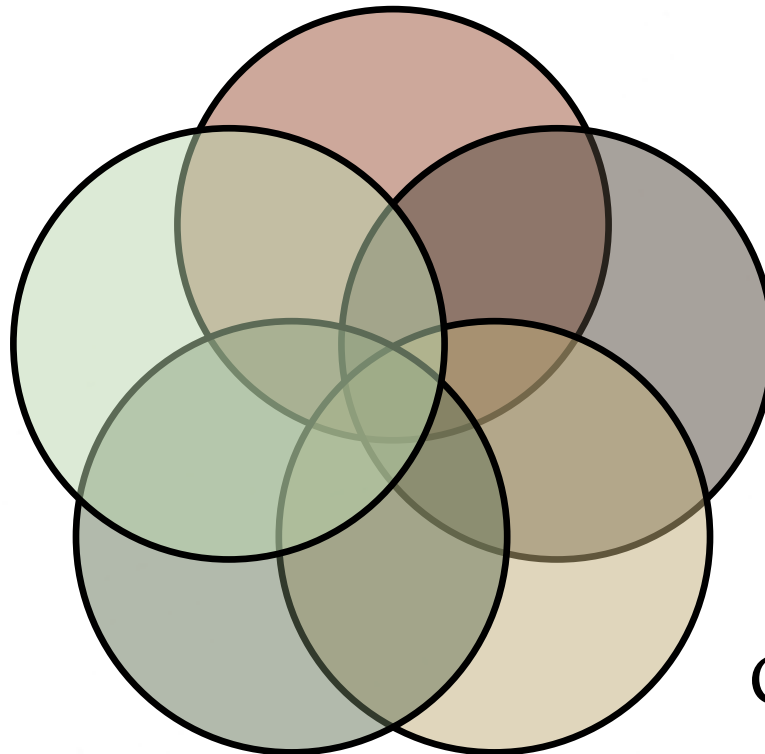
Engaged
Learning

Academic
Determination

Diverse
Citizenship

Positive
Perspective

Social
Connectedness



Five Factors of Thriving

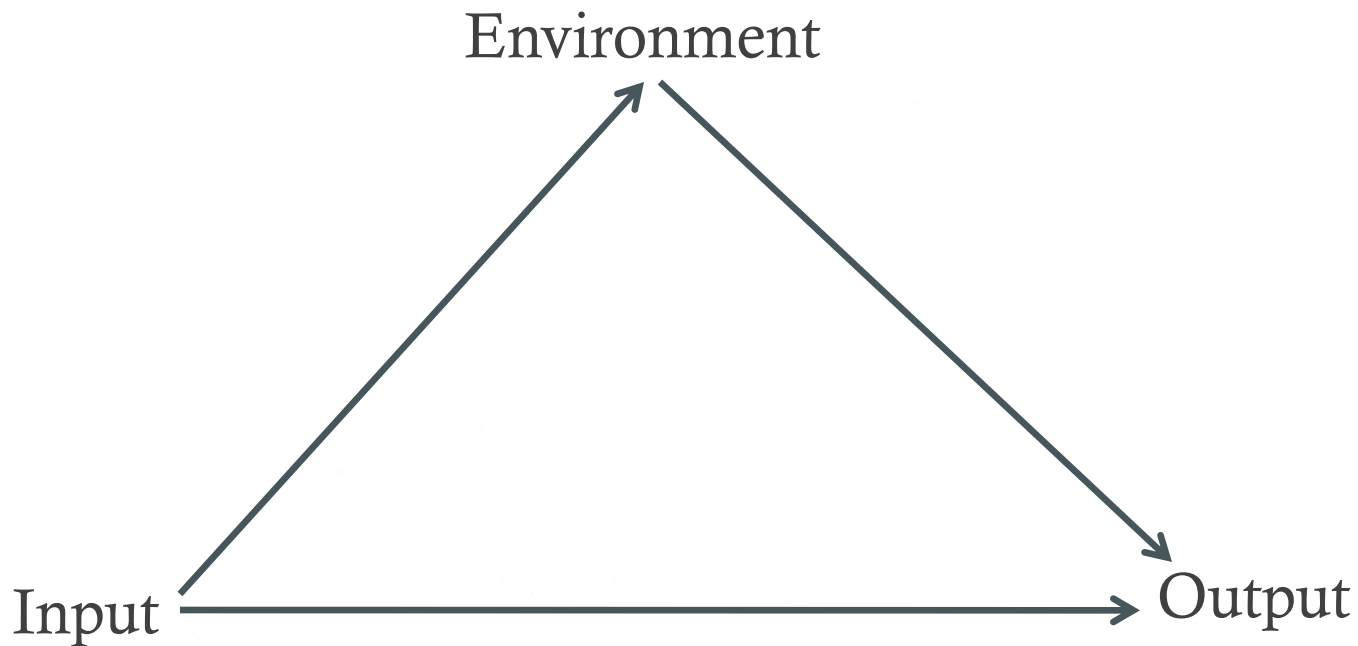
- **Engaged Learning**
 - Meaningful processing, focused attention, active participation in the learning process
- **Academic Determination**
 - Self-regulated learning, effort, coping skills, goal-directedness (hope)
- **Diverse Citizenship**
 - Making a contribution, appreciation of differences
- **Social Connectedness**
 - Positive relationships and access to friendships
- **Positive Perspective**
 - Optimism and subjective well-being

Research Questions

What does student thriving ADD to our ability to predict intent to graduate and college grades?



Conceptual Framework for Predictive Study

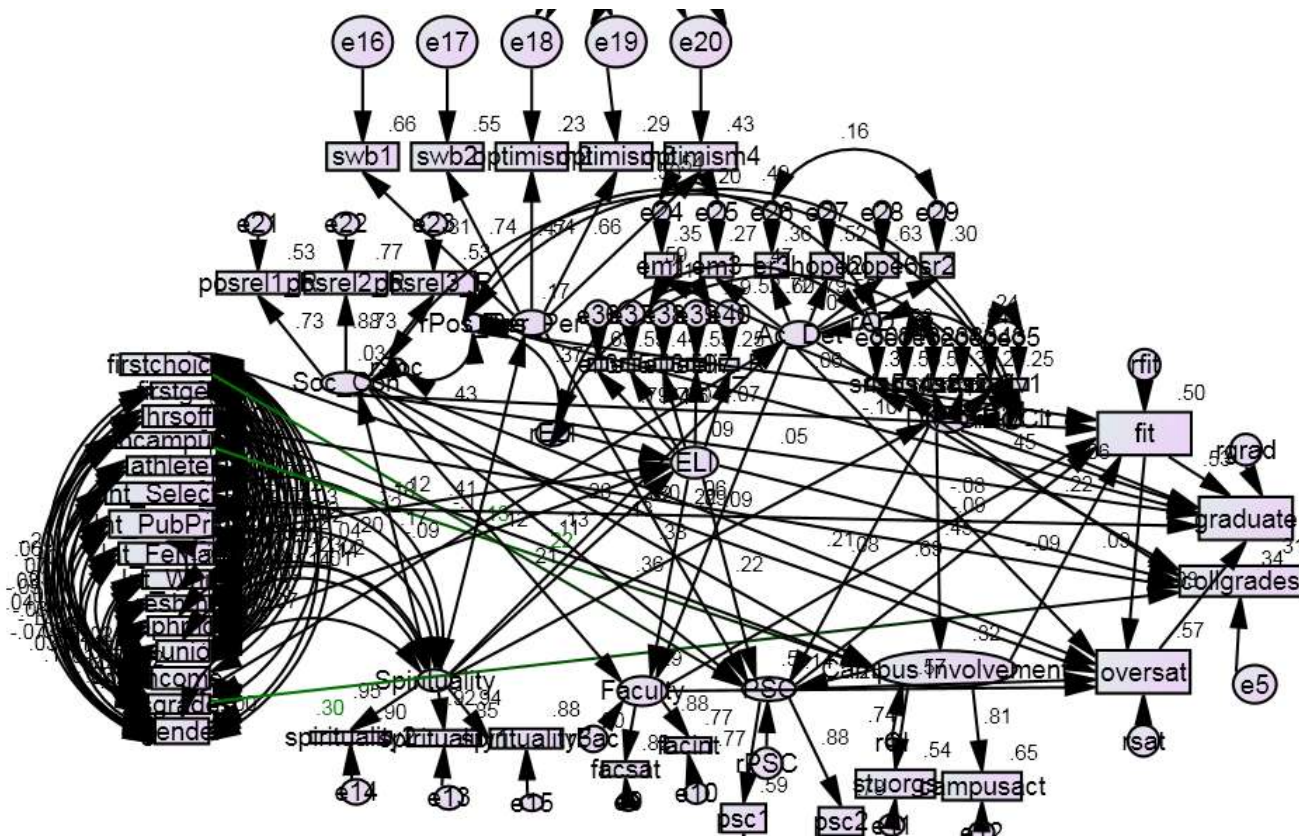


Astin's I-E-O Model

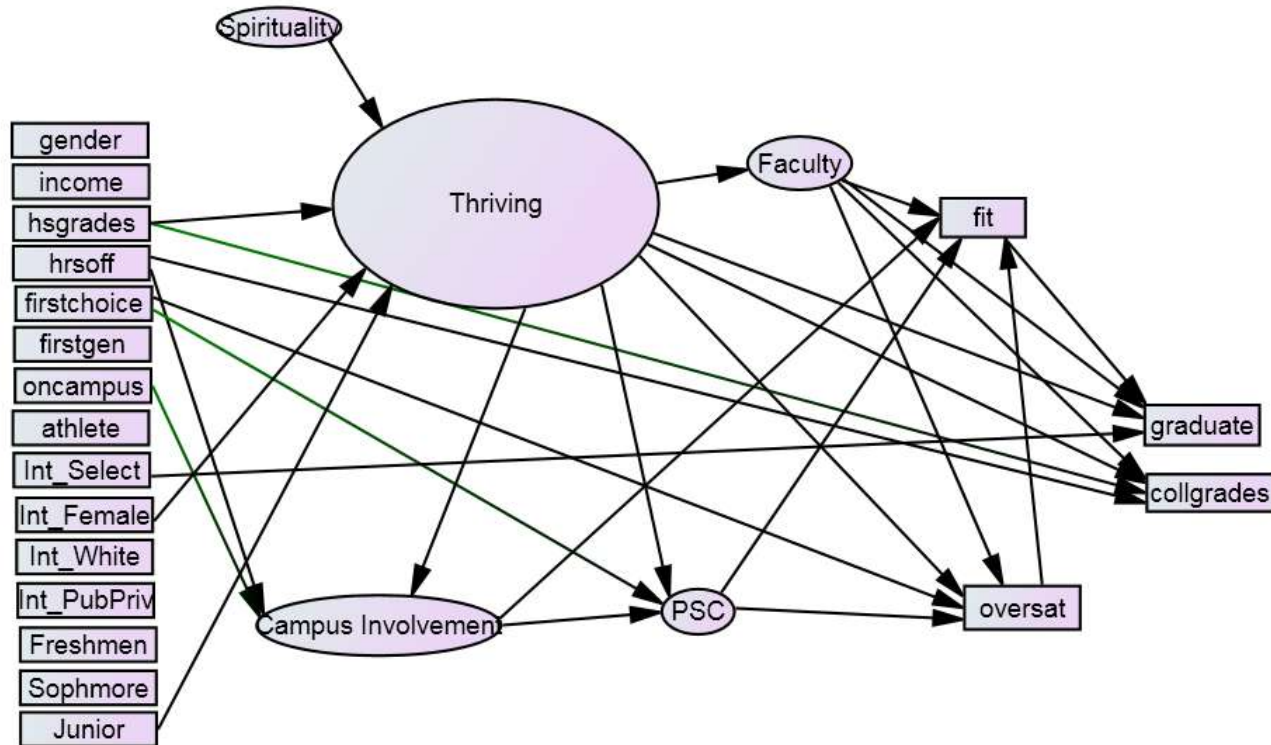
Methods

- 35 private and 18 public four-year colleges and universities administered the Thriving Quotient
- Surveys were administered on-line – response rates averaged 12%
- After eliminating outliers and students over age 25, final sample consisted of 5,562 participants
 - 70% female
 - 21% first-generation
 - 80% Caucasian

Data Analysis



Structural Equation Model



Findings

- The model fits this new data very well
[$\chi^2 (1172) = 8,351.74 (p < .001)$, CFI = .940, RMSEA = .033]
- The model predicts 35% of the variation in intent to graduate and 31% of the variation in college grades
- Thriving explains an additional 12-22% of the variation in student success outcomes, above and beyond other predictors

Implications for Practice

Individual student level:

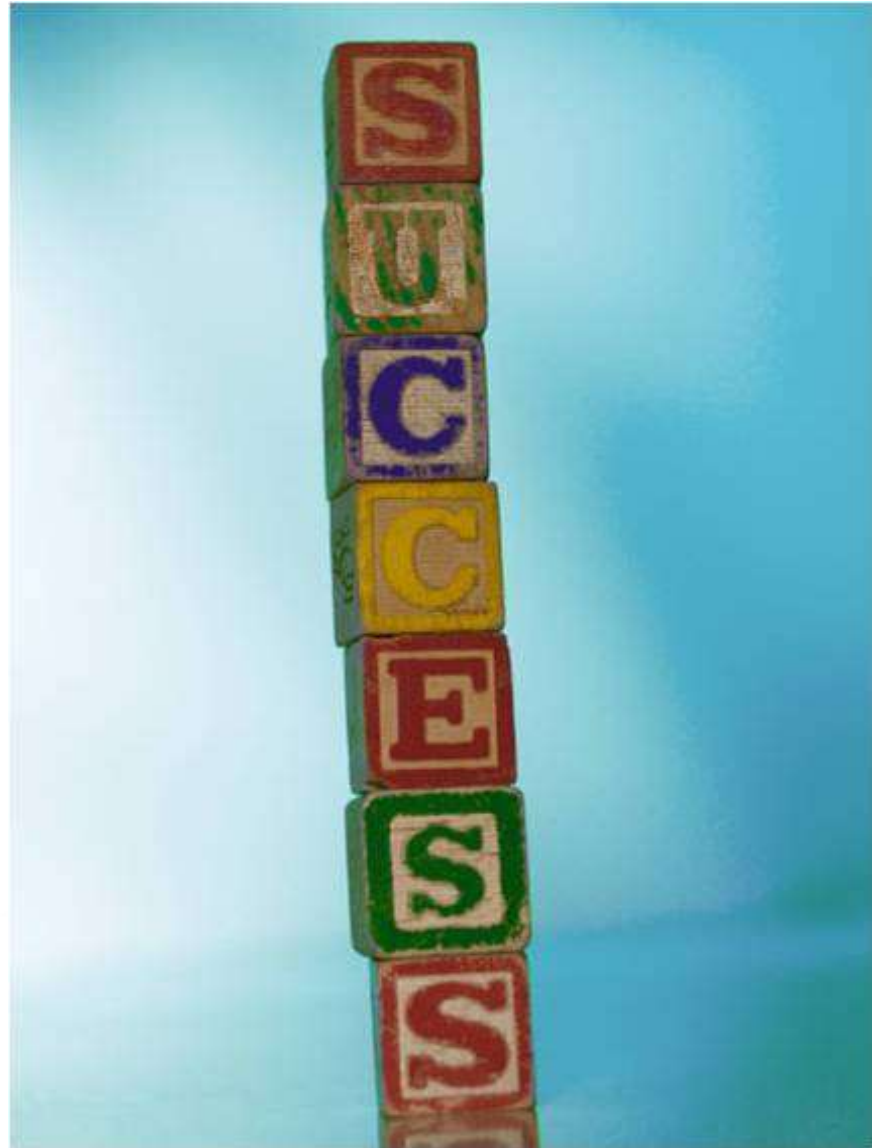
Interventions targeted to specific aspects of thriving

Institutional level:

Who is thriving?

In what aspects?

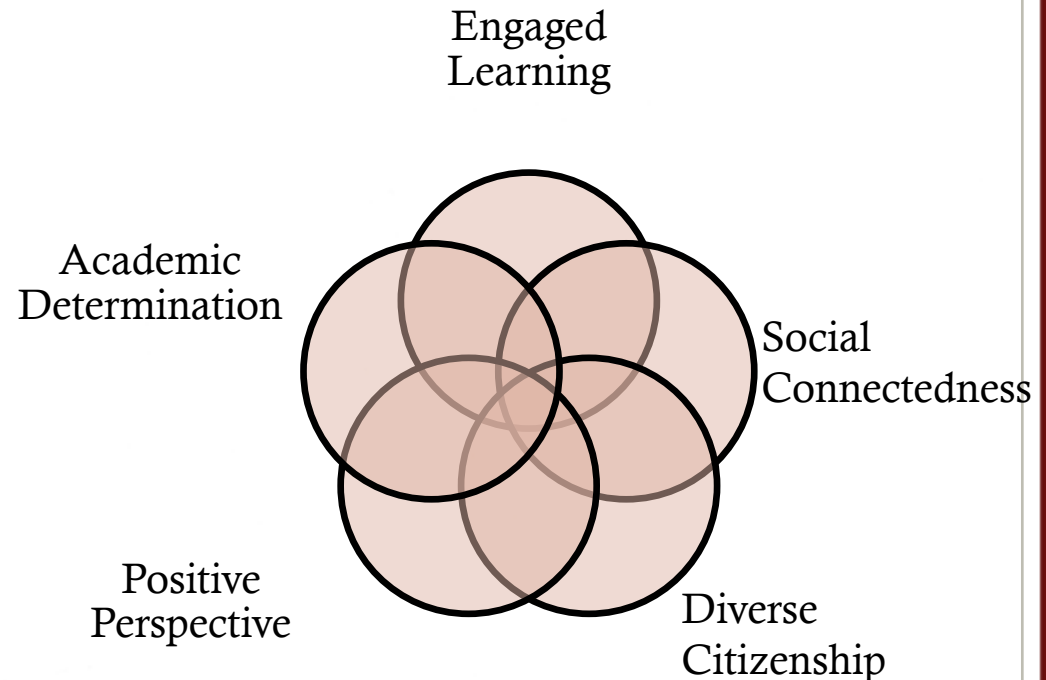
Targeting programs and services



What would help students thrive?

Group Work:

Specific suggestions for campuses that wish to help students thrive



Five Factors of Thriving

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Engaged Learning

Look beyond behavior

Focus on faculty
development

Teach students how to
make connections in their
learning

Create seamless learning
environments



Academic Determination



- **Build hope: Advising**
 - Goal setting and pathways to success
- **Learn how to learn: FYE**
 - Self-regulation
- **Emphasize the role of effort in success**
 - Normalize the help-seeking process
 - Mastery takes practice and effort

Social Connectedness



- **Nurture a sense of belonging**
 - Mattering
 - Welcome
 - Commitment to student welfare
- **Encourage positive interactions with others:**
 - Selective involvement in campus activities and organizations
 - Build a sense of community in the classroom

Diverse Citizenship



- Study abroad
- Service learning
- Living-learning communities

IF

- Sustained contact
- Adequate support and safe environment for conflict resolution
- Common goal that requires collaboration

Positive Perspective



- Equip with optimistic explanatory style
 - Advising
 - Peer leaders
 - First day of class
- Envision future success
 - Advising – possible selves
- Teach students to develop and apply their strengths as a foundation for facing challenges (contributes to all aspects of thriving)

Additional Points of Intervention



- **Spirituality contributes to all thriving—especially:**
 - Positive Perspective
 - Diverse Citizenship
- **Faculty Interaction**
 - Engaged Learning
- **Campus Involvement**
 - Diverse Citizenship
 - Social Connectedness
- **Major Certainty**
 - Contributes to every aspect of thriving

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

- **Limitations:**

- Sampling: Over-representation of white females – only four-year institutions



- **Directions for future research:**

- Use actual persistence and GPA as outcomes
- Longitudinal study: thriving over time, changes in thriving



- **Tomorrow at 12:15: Pathways to Thriving in Students of Color**



Join us for the 2011 Thriving Project!

www.ThrivingInCollege.org