



rnl national conference
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empowering higher education

From First Contact to Graduation: Maximizing Impact on Enrollment and Student Success

**Dr. Amber Williams, Vice Provost for Student Success,
University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

Dr. Reena Lichtenfeld, VP Consulting Services, RNL



76.5% of our students
return after year one

62% of our first-year
students graduate in 6
years

Why?

What if We Changed That?

THEY NEED
SUPPORT



COMMUNITY
TO SUCCEED

Deficit Mindset

Historically ...

- We ask scholars to conform to our norm—to assimilate.
- We ignore the individual perspectives each scholar brings to the table.
- Scholars are punished for their academic preparedness before college.



Shift From Deficit Thinking

**Deficit
Mindset**



**Strengths-Based
Mindset**

A deficit mindset impedes an organization's success by limiting potential. To enhance the organization's success, we encourage the shift from a deficit to a strengths-based mindset.

Strengths-Framed Examples

Term

Strengths-Based

Students



Scholars

Improve, Support



Enhance, Enrich

Tutors



Learning Consultants

Increase



Sharpen, Hone, Perfect

Help



Facilitate, Benefit

Building healthy organizations in higher education

Asset-based approach



Source: *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*, Lencioni, 2002

Are you in an asset-based or deficit-based organization?

Let's explore: Indicators of high vs. low trust organizations

LOW (80% Tax)	HIGH (40% Dividend (World-class trust))
<p>In the organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dysfunctional environment and toxic culture• Militant stakeholders• Intense micromanagement• Redundant hierarchy• Punishing systems and structures	<p>In the organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High collaboration and partnering• Effortless communication• Positive, transparent relationships with employees and all stakeholders• Fully aligned systems & structures• Strong innovation, engagement, confidence, and loyalty
<p>In relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dysfunctional relationships• Hot, angry confrontations or cold, bitter withdrawal• Defensive posturing and legal positioning• Labeling of others as enemies or allies• Verbal, emotional, and/or physical abuse	<p>In relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• True joy in family and friendships• Free, effortless communication• Inspiring work done together and characterized by purpose, creativity, and excitement• Completely open, transparent relationships• Amazing energy created by relationships

What leadership says and how they say it in an asset-based organization

What coach-manager approach looks like

DOES	DOES NOT
Ask & Listen	Tell & Lecture
Focus on the employee's agenda	Focus on his or her own agenda
Says: Tell me how I can help	Says: Here is what I need you to do
Help employees solve and prevent problems	Solve employees' problems for them
Model leadership behavior for employee	Tell employees how they should act
Help employees hold themselves accountable for progress and results	Accept fault, blame, or excuses

Case Study: The University of Tennessee

The Volunteer Experience

The **Volunteer Experience** will produce scholars who thrive



To create this outcome UT will promote **well-being** across campus



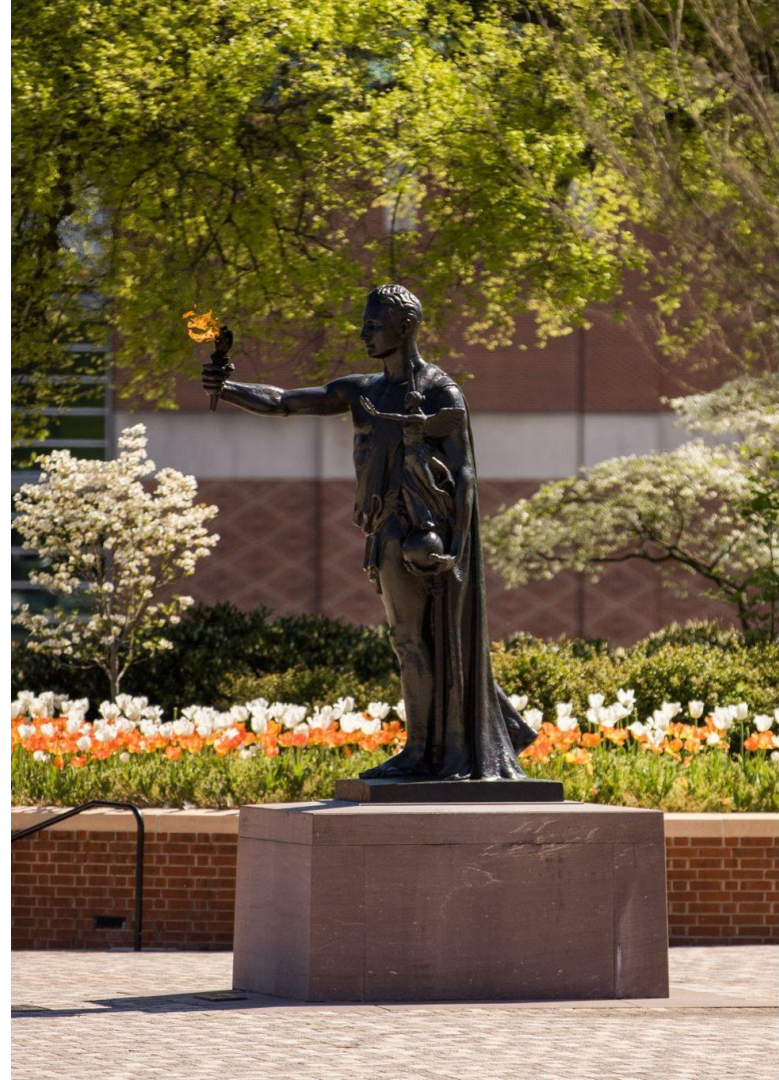
How Did We Increase Student Success Outcomes

- Leading through Strengths: Clifton Strengths
- New Vol Experience (First-Year Onboarding process)
- Vol Success Teams
- Personalized Programming: First Gen, UT Success Academy, Veterans, Undecided Majors
- Faculty Engagement: Student Success Grants & Volunteer Experience
Faculty Fellows, Student Success Faculty Advisory Boards

Strengths Based Foundation to Recruitment and Success

Student Outcomes at UT

- 96% the first-year class were in good academic standing - the highest percentage on record
- 91.1% student retention rate, the national average is 76.5%. Five years ago, 86.5%
- 91.4% positive career outcome rate for the 2023 graduating class - the highest in UT history, five years ago, 81%





Questions to Consider...



Describe your approach to success. Do you lean more towards deficit framing or strengths-based approaches?



What would it take to move your organization more toward creating the conditions where people thrive through strengths?



Share something unique you're doing at your campus to compliment this work.





Q & A



Dr. Amber Williams, Vice Provost for Student Success, University of Tennessee



@utk.viceprovost



@ambers_williams



Dr. Reena Lichtenfeld, VP Consulting Services, RNL



@reenaenrollmentpro

