

ASSISTING STUDENTS IN NEED OF ACADEMIC ACTION

DR. REBECCA G. LAWVER, TAYLOR ADAMS, LISA ALLEN, & JANET ANDERSON | UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

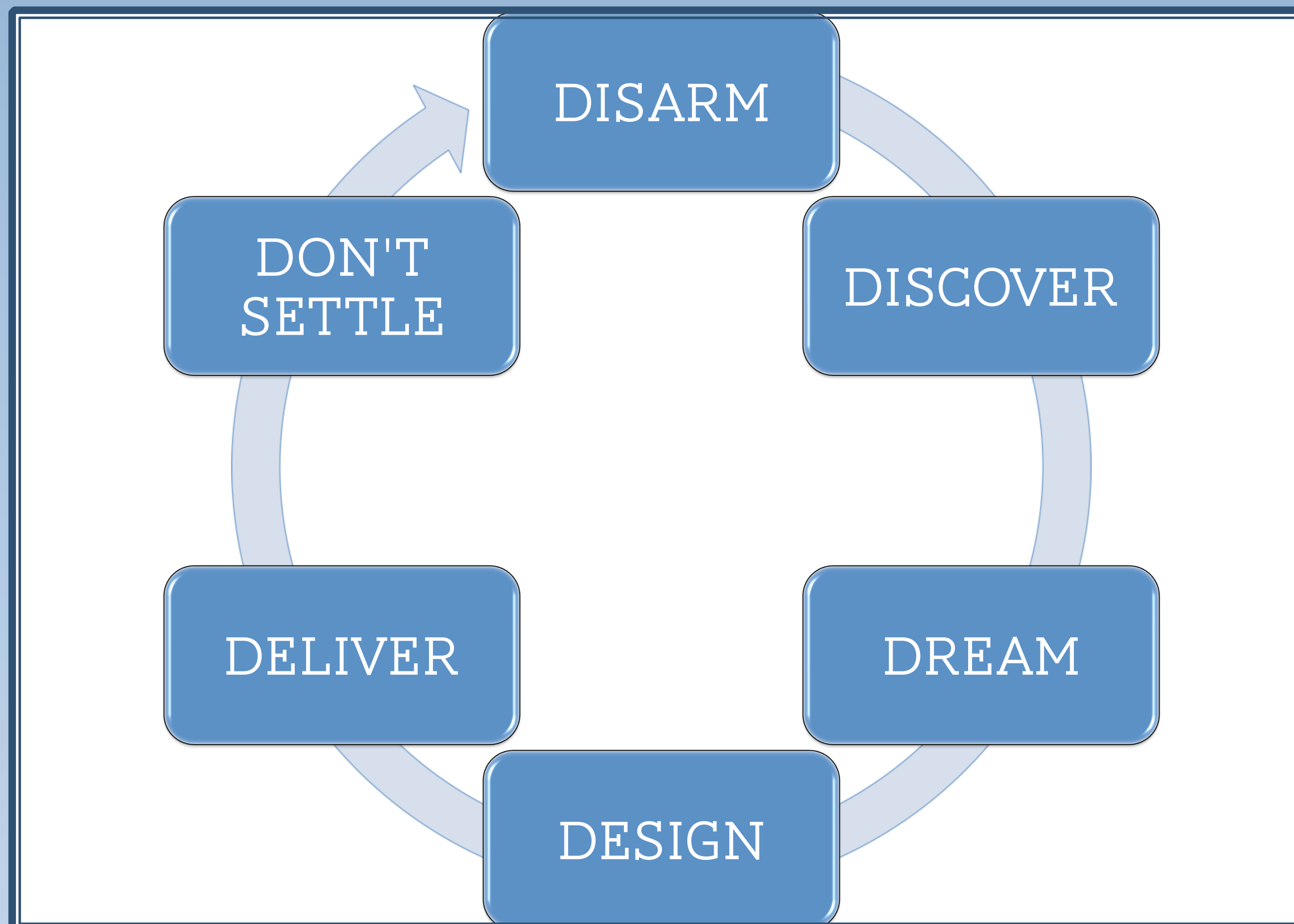
Across the country, students are leaving institutions of higher education without completing their degrees.

KEY FACTS

- Estimated 29% attrition in four-year public institutions
- Academic advising plays a key role in student success

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Appreciative Advising (Bloom & Martin, 2002) is the intentional collaborative practice of asking positive, open-ended questions that help students optimize their educational experience.



The Appreciative Advising model does not espouse a touchy feely style of feel-good-for-no-reason approach; rather, it demands that advisors work hard to understand human behavior and use both theory and the stories of students to prevent young promising adults from settling for a “good” life as they aspire toward a great life (Bloom, et al., 2008, p. 97).

PURPOSE & METHODS

The purpose of this study was to describe the internal and external characteristics of the students in need of academic action at Utah State University.

The population for this study were students in need of academic action in the 2012-2013 school year (N = 124) in the college of agriculture. A response rate of 54% (n = 67) was achieved.

Students were asked to complete the electronic version of the Appreciative Advising Inventory which consisted of 44 questions.

To control for non-response error, early and late responder scores were compared. Non-respondent results were not significantly different than the respondent group.

Reliability of the Appreciative Advising Inventory resulted in a Chronbach’s alpha ranging from .79 to .85 (Bloom et al., 2008).

“TELL ME ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOU FELT MOTIVATED TO DO WELL IN SCHOOL?”

“WHAT NEW CLUB OR ACTIVITY ON CAMPUS WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN?”

“HOW ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE?”



RESULTS

The majority of the students in need of academic action were freshman (n = 43), 65%, female (n = 42), 63%, and white (n = 56) 84%.

The lowest Grade Point Average reported was a .21 on a 4.0 scale, with a mean GPA of 1.55.

TABLE 1
INTERNAL ASSET CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS IN NEED OF ACADEMIC ACTION (n = 67)

INTERNAL ASSET	M	SD
Positive Values	4.47	.60
Commitment to learning	4.28	.69
Social competencies	4.23	.50
Positive identity	3.88	.54

TABLE 2
EXTERNAL ASSET CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS IN NEED OF ACADEMIC ACTION (n = 67)

EXTERNAL ASSET	M	SD
Support/Connectedness	4.09	.64
Empowerment	4.01	.52
Boundaries & Expectations	3.95	.67
Constructive Use of Time	3.80	.69

INDIVIDUAL ITEMS OF NOTE

- 83% Strong desire to get good grades
- 85% Actively pursuing academic goals
- 43% Struggling to meet goals
- 82% Have strong family support
- 43% Do not know 3 people at USU to go to for help
- 49% Have poor time management skills
- 46% Do not participate in campus activities

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Students are committed to their education
- Students need assistance with self esteem and positive identity
- Advisors must assist in finding support and connections on campus in the form of faculty and campus organizations

Academic advisors should invest in training and certification in the Appreciative Advising method and questioning strategies to assist students in those areas that need improvement.