COACHING TO INCREASE RETENTION IN ONLINE DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAMS
A PROMISING PRACTICE STUDY
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Inquiry Questions
What knowledge, motivation and organizational assets do the Inside Track Coaches have that contribute to increased online course and program completion rates?

What solutions and recommendations in the areas of knowledge, motivation and organizational resources do the Inside Track coaches have that may be appropriate for solving this problem of practice at another academic organization or institution?

Literature Review Touchpoints
Retention continues to be a big issue in online programs and limits its acceptance and use

Although online degree completion programs are established and first time students are the majority, studies on each are rare

Coaching for completion in higher education is new and comes out of the therapy, counselling and psychology professions

Study Methods
Interviews of 12 Elite Coaches
Four Focus Groups
Observation at each coaching center
Document review of the coach leveling criteria
Manager interview at each location

Key Findings: Characteristics of Great Coaches
Good coaches know when and how to develop non-cognitive skills and growth mindset in each individual student

Good coaches are grounded and guided by the key core values of empathy and caring

Good coaches have high levels of trust with each student and with the organization as a whole

Good coaches are self-aware. They monitor and adjust their coaching to improve results. They are aware of bias and they avoid judgements and stereotypes

Good coaches work in a positive, supportive, aligned and role model driven culture and environment

Guiding Values and Beliefs of Successful Coaches
Compassion, Caring and Empathy
Always Striving to Improve
Does Not Judge, Presume or Assume

Trust as Core to Conflict Resolution
Results Accountability and Commitment

Areas for Future Research
The coaches are starting to coach through web based applications and research is necessary to understand the effectiveness, impact, and limitations of these new coaching channels

Research into the effectiveness of early career coaching might help institutions offering degree completion programs to develop or tailor strategies to recruit, admit, and retain students with increased likelihoods of persistence

Given the key findings of this study around the importance of non-cognitive skills and growth mindset development, further study and additional development efforts around effectively assessing and measuring these skills is needed.