

Center for the Study of College Student Retention

Retention Resources for Individuals & Educational Institutions

College Student Retention: A Primmer

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Learning Objectives

- **Learn the Basics About College Student Retention**
- **Identification of Retention/Attrition Issues**
- **Review of Retention Data**
- **College Choice Factors**
- **Deal Effectively With College/university Personnel**

How Theory & Research Inform Higher Education Administrative Practice: Student Retention Initiatives

Students:

Academic and/or personal goal attainment

Universities:

Fulfillment of mission

College Student Retention Continues To Be A Concern To Universities, U.S., State and Local Governments, Students, And Parents

Accountability

Cost

Debt

U. S. Education Department Will Emphasize Retention Issues in Next Higher Education Act, Official Says

Data indicate that the record of all kinds of colleges on retaining first- and second-year students "is not good," said Ms. Stroup. U.S. Education Department will examine retention policies "and look at ways to use federal money in an incentive fashion to reward programs that work," she said.

"I think you'll see that now we'll be pushing for outcomes and results," she said, noting that the Education Department will look specifically at retention and completion rates. "These are things we need to be able to show to be accountable to the taxpayer," she said.

Proposed Student-Data System Can Be Made Secure, Report Says

Department officials have argued that the proposed system would allow it to measure a college's performance more accurately by generating better information about retention and graduation rates and by enabling it to track transfer students. It would also allow the department, for the first time, to calculate an institution's net price, or what students actually pay after financial aid is taken into account.

Source: Field, K. (April 1, 2005). Proposed student-data system can be made secure, report says. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, LI (30), 1.

Why Worry About Retention?

Student Development Issues

Financial Issues

Obligation To Students We Admit To Our Universities

Why Worry About Retention?

Student Development Issues

- Develop Critical Thinking Skills
- Contribute To Society
- Preparation For The World Of Work
- Tolerance Of Individual Differences
- Appreciation of Life Long Learning Opportunities

Financial Issues

- Lost Tuition & Fee Revenue
- Campus & Community Spending
- Cost To Make Up Loss
- Burden To Parents & Students

Obligation To Students

- Reasonable Expectation For Success
- Loss Of Time The Non-Renewable Resource 168 Hours Per Week
- Turned Off To Future Educational Opportunities
- Upgrading Of Skills For Job Advancement or Skills For Another Job
- Unhappy Students Tell Others Of Their Experience

College is Cost Effective to Students

Average Household Income:

- **Students with a high school diploma will earn more money than those without a high school diploma.**
- **Students with an associates degree will earn more money than those with a high school diploma**

Average household income rises \$14,354 with an associates degree

- **Students with a bachelor degree will earn more money than those with a high school diploma**

Average household income rises \$37,874 with a bachelor degree

Retention is Cost Effective For Colleges

Tuition & Fees = \$10,000 per year

(Three Year Loss Per Student = \$30,000)



ONLY

10

STUDENTS

=

(\$50,000) ONE TERM

(\$300,000) THREE YEARS

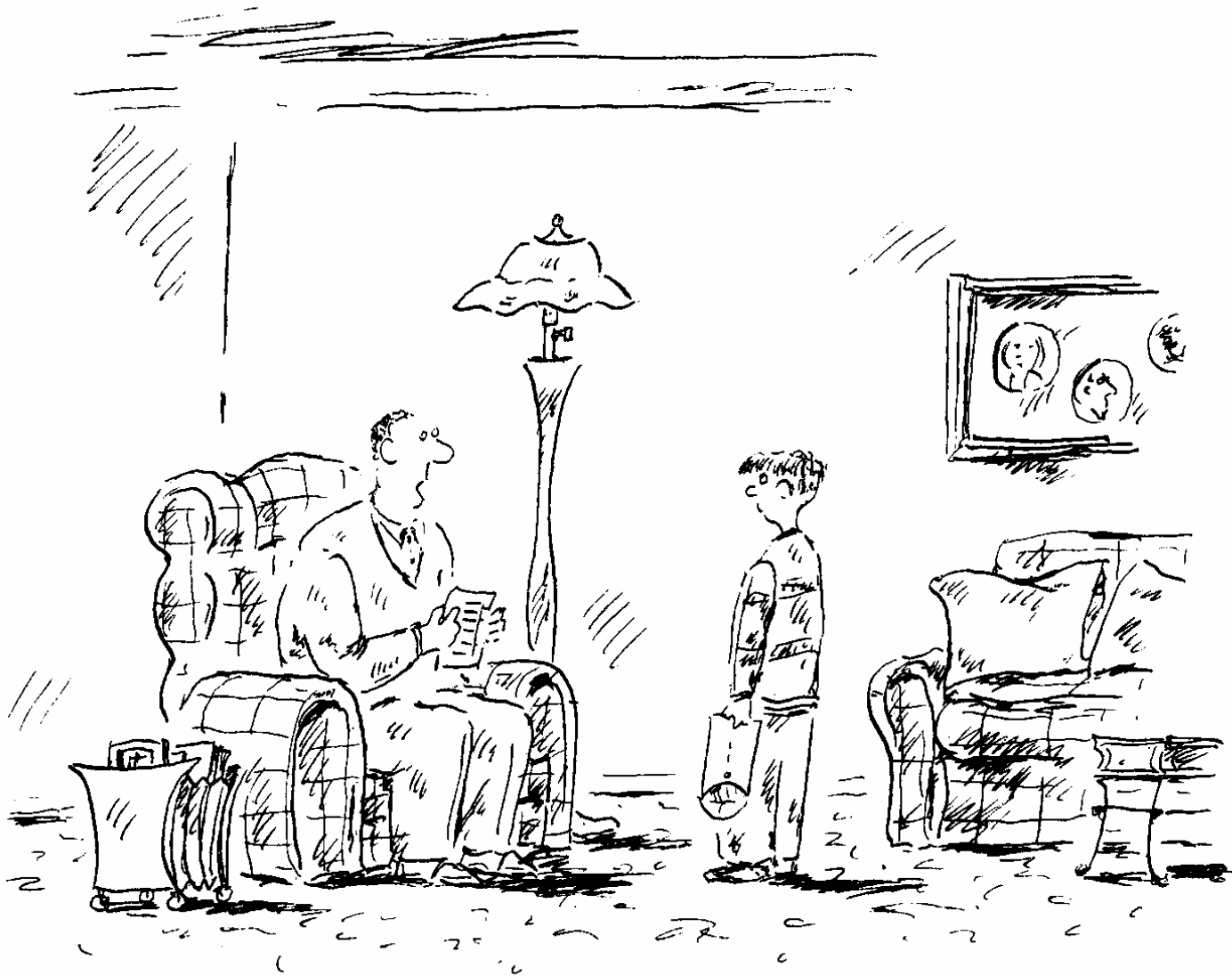
This does not count auxiliary services money

2002 Revenue Generated by Auxiliary Services

Auxiliary services are defined as operations that furnish a service to students, faculty members, and staff members, and include such operations as residence halls, food services, student health services, college stores, and movie theaters.

<u>Type of institution</u>	<u>Amount of total revenue</u>	<u>Percentage of total revenue to institutions</u>
Public 4-year	\$14.8-billion	10.2%
Public 2-year	\$1.7-billion	5.4%
Private 4-year (nonprofit)	\$8.7-billion	10.7%
Private 2-year (nonprofit)	\$39-million	6.5%
Private 4-year (for profit)	\$106-million	3.6%
Private 2-year (for profit)	\$67-million	3.3%

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



B. S m a l l e r

"They may be your grades, but they're the return on my investment."

Burden To Parents & Students

Sixty-three percent of all undergraduates received some form of financial aid during the 2003-4 academic year, up from 55 percent in 1999-2000

2003-4 the students received on average \$7,400 each up from \$6,200 in 1999-2000

2003-4 Three out of four students in graduate school or a professional Program received aid averaging about \$15,100

Fifty-one percent of undergraduates received grants, 35 percent took out loans, 8 percent received work-study aid, and 7 percent got other types of aid, including federal PLUS loans, veterans' benefits, and job-training funds.

What You Should Know About Student Retention/Attrition

Retention Theories

How To Define Retention/Attrition?

Student Behaviors:

Reasons Students Noted As Very Important in Deciding to Go to College?

Reasons Students Noted As Very Important in Selecting College Attended

What The Data Does Or Does Not Tell Us

Action Steps To Help Solve The Retention/Attrition Problem

A Look At A Few Retention Theories



A Few Retention Theories

Astin's (1977, 1985) Theory of Involvement

The more involved a student is with the college, the higher likelihood of student retention.

Bean's (1980, 1983) Model of Work Turnover to Student Attrition

Used concepts from organizational studies of worker turnover. Examines how organizational attributes and reward structures affect student satisfaction and persistence.

Bean and Metzner's (1985) Nontraditional Student Attrition

Environmental factors have a greater impact on departure decisions of adult students than academic variables.

Kamens (1971, 1974)

Used multi-institutional data to demonstrate how colleges of greater size and complexity had lower attrition rates.

McNeely (1937) "College Student Mortality"

Examined many factors in college student retention including time to degree, when attrition was most prevalent in a student's education, impact of college size etc.

Spady Model (1971)

Interaction between student characteristics and campus environment

Summerskill (1962)

Personality attributes of students is the main reasons for persistence and leaving.

Tinto Model (1975, 1993)

Academic and social integration with the formal and informal academic and social systems of a college.

Witt & Handal (1984)

Person-environment fit.

Most of these theories have been taken from:

Berger, J. B., & Lyons, S. (2005). Past to present: A historical look at retention. In Seidman, A. (Ed.), *College student retention: Formula for student success*. ACE/Praeger Press.

Braxton, J. M. & Hirschy, A. S. (2005). Theoretical Developments in the study of college student departure. In Seidman, A. (Ed.), *College student retention: Formula for student success*. ACE/Praeger Press.

Tinto Model Major Concepts

Interactions

- **Individual Pre-entry College Attributes Such As Family Background, Skill And Ability, Prior Schooling Form Individual Goals And Commitments**
- **Individual's Goals And Commitments Interact *Over Time* With Institutional Experiences (Formal And Informal Academic And Social Systems)**
- **The Extent The Individual Becomes Academically And Socially Integrated Into The Academic And Social Systems Of An Institution Determines Departure Decision**

Astin's Student Involvement

- "Student involvement" refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that a student devotes to the academic experience.
- Highly involved student who devotes considerable energy to studying, participates in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members, is more committed to the institution.
- The more committed to the institution, the higher likelihood of success.
- Anything that is done to enhance a student's commitment to a goal and to the institution should further enhance his/her social and academic integration, and therefore promote retention.

Person-Environment Fit Theory

- **Person-environment fit theory predicts that congruence between the person and the social environment results in satisfaction**
- **Institutional programs that promote student institutional "fit" from the beginning and programs, which promote student development and involvement in the institution, should produce satisfied students.**
- **Satisfied students should achieve their academic and personal goals more fully than those students who are not satisfied with the institution or its environment.**

Different Types of Student Departure

System: From the educational system

Institutional: From a particular college

Major: A specific discipline/program

Course: A particular course

Voluntary: A student leaves on his/her own

Involuntary: A college lets a student go

Defining Retention/Attrition

Defining Retention/Attrition: Terminology Not Always The Same or Simple

- **Attrition:** a student who fail to reenroll at an institution in consecutive terms
- **Dismissal:** a student who is not permitted to continue enrollment by the institution
- **Dropout:** a student whose initial educational goal was to complete at least a bachelor's degree but did not complete it
- **Mortality:** failure of a student to remain in college until graduation
- **Persistence:** the desire and action of a student to stay within the system of higher education from beginning through degree completion
- **Retention:** ability of an institution to retain a student from admission through graduation
- **Stopout:** a student who temporarily withdraws from an institution or system
- **Withdrawal:** departure of a student from a college campus

Defining Retention/Attrition

Federal Government Program Retention Definition:

Tracks the full-time, first-time student in a degree program over time (6yrs/4yr college, 3yrs/2yr college) to determine whether the student has completed the program.

Reasons Students Noted As Very Important in Deciding to Go to College?

	Total%	Men%	Women%
To learn more about things that interest me	76.8	72.0	80.7
To get training for a specific career	74.6	70.1	78.2
To be able to get a better job	71.8	71.9	71.8
To be able to make more money	70.1	72.9	67.8
To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas	64.6	57.6	70.2
To prepare myself for graduate or professional school	56.7	49.8	62.2
To find my purpose in life	51.8	44.0	58.0
My parents wanted me to go	41.8	38.9	44.1
To make me a more cultured person	40.5	33.3	46.2
Wanted to get away from home	21.5	21.4	21.6
I could not find a job	6.0	5.8	6.2
There was nothing better to do	4.0	5.2	2.9

Reasons Students Noted As Very Important in Selecting College Attended

	Total%	Men%	Women%
College has a very good academic reputation	56.7	52.1	60.4
Graduates get good jobs	49.1	45.3	52.1
A visit to the campus	39.0	32.7	44.1
Wanted to go to a college about the size of this college	35.8	28.2	41.8
Offered financial assistance	33.7	29.6	37.1
Cost of attendance	31.0	27.3	33.9
Graduates gain admission to top grad/professional schools	28.9	24.5	32.4
College has a good reputation for its social activities	28.3	27.3	29.1
Wanted to live near home	17.0	13.2	20.1
Rankings in national magazines	14.7	14.5	14.8
Information from web site	13.5	10.6	15.9
My relatives wanted me to come here	9.4	8.8	9.9
Admitted through an early-action or decision program	8.6	7.8	9.3
High school counselor advised me	7.4	7.1	7.7
Religious affiliation/orientation of college	6.7	5.2	7.9
Not offered aid by first choice	6.1	5.3	6.6
My teacher advised me	4.8	4.9	4.8
Private college counselor advised me	2.4	2.6	2.3

Colleges Applied/Choice

Number of other colleges applied to for admission this year

	Total	Men	Women
None	19.3%	19.5%	19.2%
1	12.6%	12.4%	12.8%
2	15.4%	15.5%	15.3%
3	16.5%	16.7%	16.2%
4	12.0%	12.1%	11.9%
5	8.2%	8.2%	8.2%
6	5.8%	5.6%	5.9%
7 to 10	8.4%	8.0%	8.6%
11 or more	1.9%	1.9%	1.9%

College attended is student's:

First choice	69.5%	69.2%	69.9%
Second choice	21.4%	21.3%	21.4%
Third choice	5.8%	5.9%	5.7%
Less than third choice	3.3%	3.6%	3.0%

United States Demographics

Population:	293,655,404	
8 th grade or less	6.4%	
Some high school, no diploma	9.9%	
High-school diploma	29.8%	
Some college, no degree	20.3%	
Associates degree	7.0%	} 33.6
Bachelor's degree	16.9%	
Graduate or professional degree	9.7%	
2004 per-capita income	\$32,937	
2002-2003 poverty rate	12.3%	
2003 high school dropout rate	8%	

United States College Enrollment

	1980	1990	1995	1998*	1999*	2000*
All						
Total	12,086,800	13,818,600	14,261,800	14,507,000	14,791,200	15,312,300
Men	5,868,100	6,283,900	6,342,500	6,369,300	6,490,600	6,721,800
Women	6,218,700	7,534,700	7,919,200	8,137,700	8,300,600	8,590,500
Public 4-year	5,127,600	5,848,200	5,814,500	5,891,800	5,970,000	6,055,400
Public 2-year	4,328,800	4,996,500	5,277,800	5,246,000	5,339,400	5,697,400
Private 4-year	2,437,800	2,730,300	2,954,700	3,125,800	3,228,600	3,308,500
Private 2-year	192,600	243,600	214,700	243,400	253,300	251,000
Undergraduate	10,469,100	11,959,100	12,231,700	12,436,900	12,681,200	13,155,400
Graduate	1,340,900	1,586,200	1,732,500	1,767,600	1,806,800	1,850,300
Professional	276,800	273,400	297,600	302,500	303,200	306,600

NOTE: Because of rounding, details may not add to totals.

* Figures for 1998, 1999, and 2000 are not directly comparable with those of previous years because of a change in the way the U.S. Department of Education categorizes colleges and universities. Until 1996, enrollment data covered institutions accredited at the postsecondary level by an agency recognized by the department. Starting in 1996, the data cover degree-granting institutions eligible to participate in federal Title IV programs. The two classification systems are similar; the new one includes some additional, primarily two-year colleges, and excludes a few colleges that did not award degrees.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education



WILDT

“Sure, a ‘C’ is disappointing after straight ‘A’s, but wasn’t that a trend overdue for a correction?”

Pinpointing the Leaks in the Higher Education Pipeline

	Of 100 9 th graders	Graduate from HS on time	Directly enter college	Are still enrolled their 2 nd year	Graduate within 6 years	% of population 25-44 with a bachelors degree or higher 2000
United States	100	67	38	26	18	26.7

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"I believe supernatural forces are at work."

College Retention Trends

1983-2005

First to Second Year Retention Trends

	Highest %	Lowest%	2005%
Two-Year Public	53.1 ('83)	51.3 ('04)	51.6
Two-Year Private	72.6 ('92)	61.7 ('05)	61.7
BA/BS Public	70.0 ('04)	66.4 ('96, '05)	66.4
BA/BS Private	74.0 ('89)	60.1 ('97)	70.9
MA Public	70.1 ('05)	68.1 ('89)	70.1
MA Private	78.0 ('85)	74.3 ('03)	75.8
PhD Public	78.1 ('04)	73.3 ('86)	77.5
PhD Private	85.0 ('85)	82.1 ('05)	82.1
<hr/>			
National	68.3 ('04, '05)	66.6 ('96)	68.3

College Retention Trends

2004

First to Second Year Retention Rates By Admissions Selectivity

Selectivity Level	Typical Test Scores			Mean %
	ACT	SAT	N	
Highly Selective	27-31	1220-1380	73	93.3
Selective	22-27	1030-1220	198	82.6
Traditional	20-23	950-1070	315	70.8
Liberal	18-21	870-990	80	66.1
Open	17-20	830-950	106	68.1
<hr/>				
All Institutions			772	75.1

College Retention Trends

CSRDE* study

First-Year Retention Rates 2002 First-time Freshman Cohort

Selectivity Level	Return	Leave
Highly Selective	88.2%	12.8%
Selective	79.4%	20.6%
Moderately Selective	74.3%	25.7%
Less Selective	70.3%	29.7%
All Institutions	80.4%	19.6%

*Consortium of Student Retention Data Exchange

Source: Hayes, R. Q. (2004). *2003-04 CSRDE Report: The retention and graduation rates of 1996-2002 entering freshman cohorts in 421 colleges and universities*. Norman, Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma, Center for Institutional Data Exchange and Analysis

College Completion Rates

	1983-2005		
	Highest %	Lowest%	2005%
*Two-Year Public	38.8 ('89)	27.5 ('05)	27.5
Two-Year Private	66.4 ('90)	51.9 ('04)	57.5
**BA/BS Public	52.8 ('96)	39.5 ('05)	39.5
BA/BS Private	56.7 ('04)	53.3 ('01)	56.2
MA/MS Public	46.7 ('86)	37.0 ('00)	38.0
MA/MS Private	58.4 ('88)	53.5 ('01)	55.4
PhD Public	50.6 ('89, '90)	45.0 ('01)	46.8
PhD Private	68.8 ('86)	63.1 ('05)	63.1
National	54.6 ('90)	50.9 ('01)	52.1

* Three years or less

** Five years or less

Interchange Between a Student & College



A student wants a higher than high school education to acquire skills to perform a specific task. In exchange for tuition and fees a college provides the skills the student seeks.

What is the student willing to do to acquire these skills from the college?

How is the college going to provide these skills to the student?

So What Can You Do to Help A Student Achieve Her/his Academic and Personal Goals?

Seidman says,

“For Intervention Programs And Services To Be Successful They Must Be Powerful Enough To Effect Change”

A Retention Formula For Student Success

A Retention Formula For Student Success

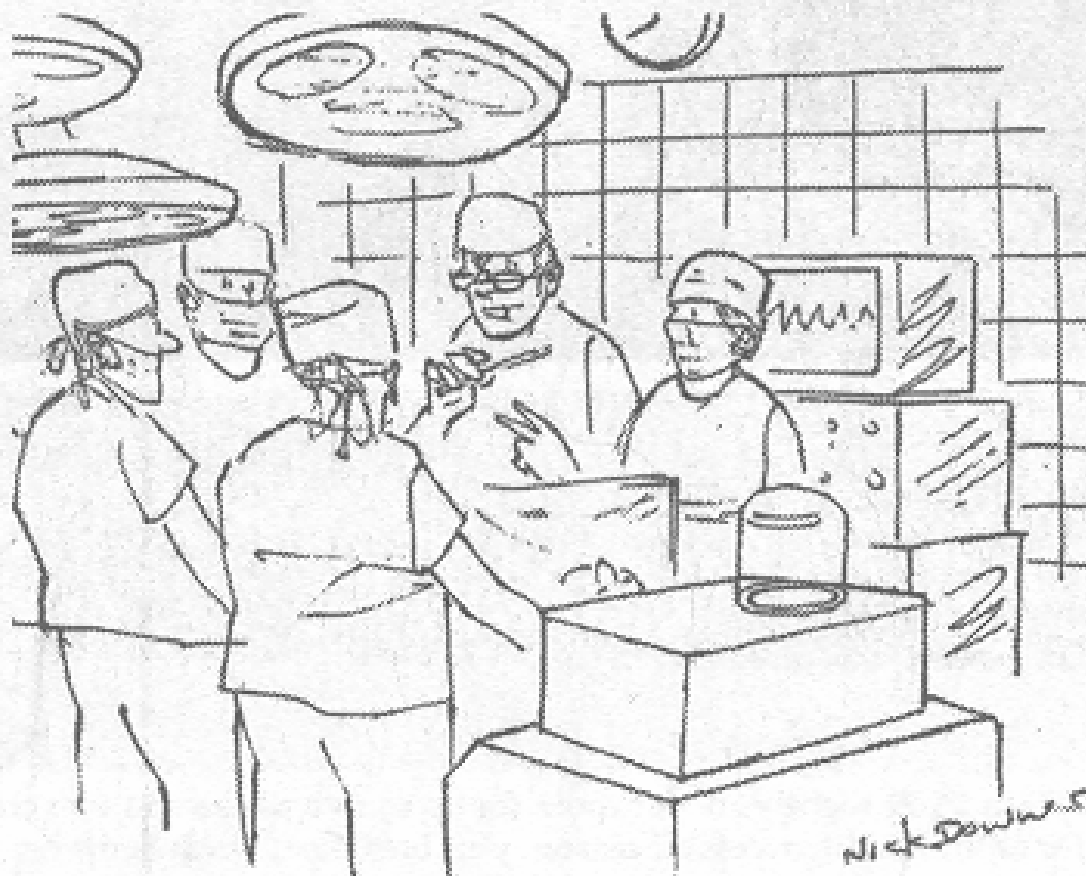
*“FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO BE SUCCESSFUL
THEY MUST BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO EFFECT CHANGE”*

$$*RET = E_{ID} + (E + IN + C)_{IV}$$

*RETENTION = EARLY IDENTIFICATION + (EARLY + INTENSIVE + CONTINUOUS) INTERVENTION

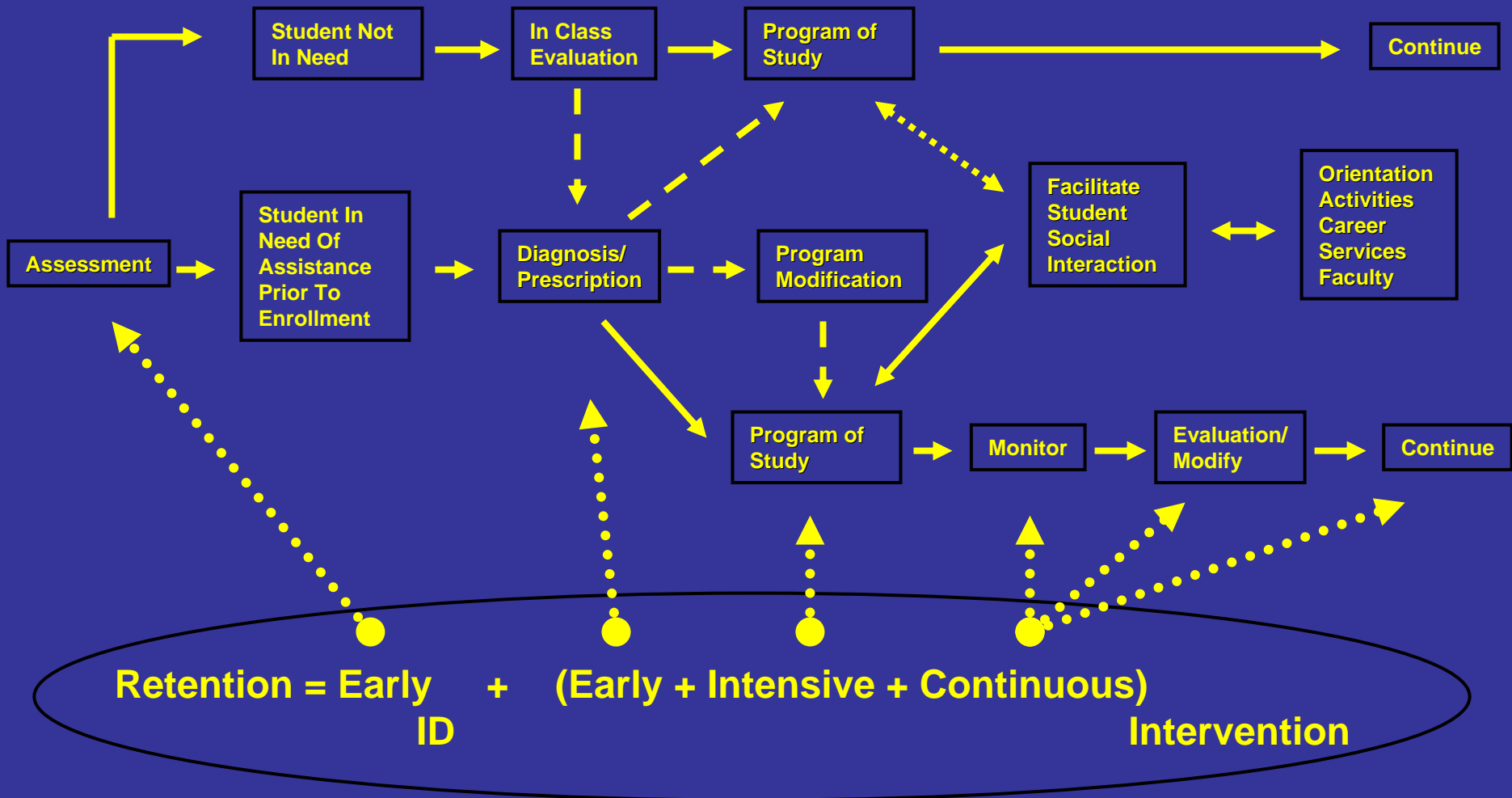
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“Now, this may look easy, but neurosurgery is really, really hard.”

Seidman Formula



REVIEW

The extent the individual becomes academically and socially integrated into the formal and informal academic and social systems of an institution determines departure decision Tinto

For intervention programs and services to be successful they must be powerful enough to effect change Seidman

Retention = Early Identification + (Early + Intensive + Continuous) Intervention Seidman

A Word About ...

Developmental Courses

Financial Aid

Orientation

Career Services

Faculty

College Mission

Developmental Courses

- Student usually placed in a developmental reading, writing, math course
- Placement based on past academic record and/or standardized placement test
- Sometimes pre-test at the beginning of the developmental course
- Sometimes post-test at the end of the developmental course
- Student must obtain a specific grade to continue into the next level course
- Regardless of skill needs student is enrolled in a full term course

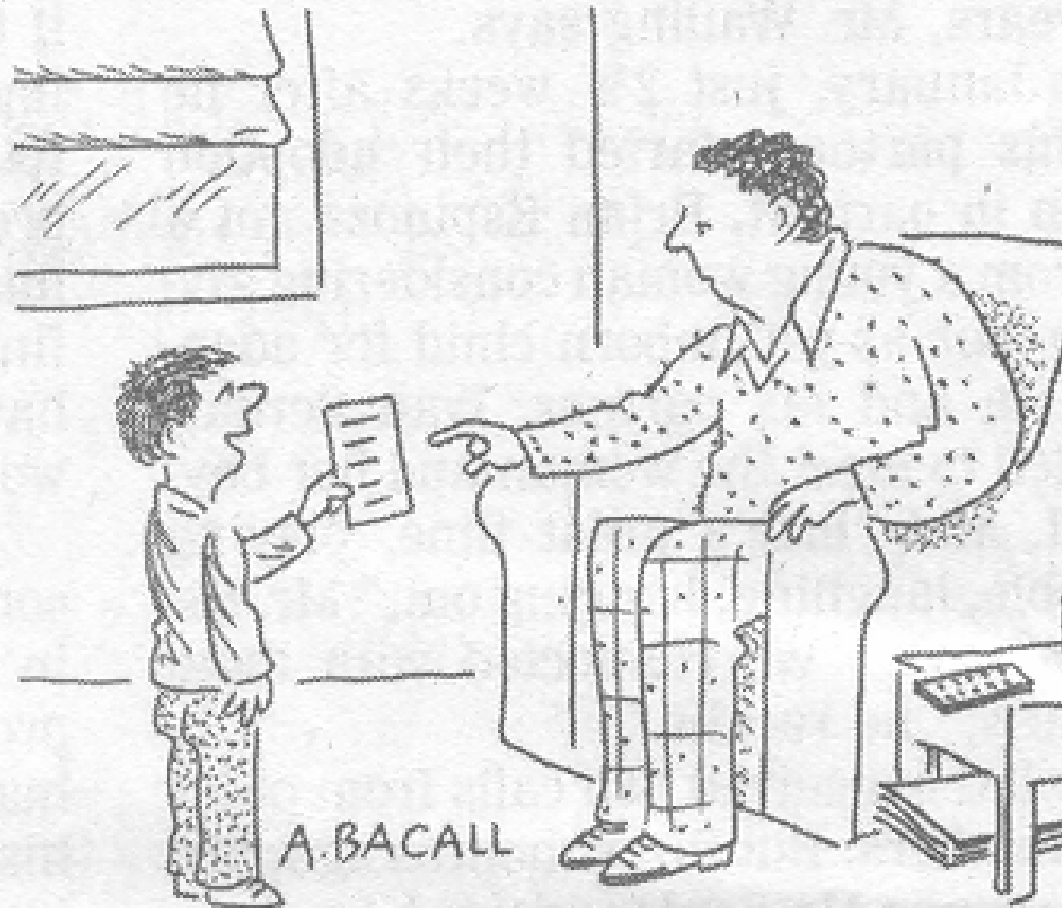
Developmental Courses

University Community

- Does your assessment identify specific skills in need of remediation?
- Does your developmental course skills line up with the skills needed for the next level course?
- Can you divide the developmental course into modules and have a student only take the one (s) he/she needs?

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“Here’s my report card. I beat the street expectations.”

Financial Aid Offices

- **Second (probably first in many instances) contact with student, in writing, web, telephone, in person**
- **Many mailings to students**
- **Bring in a lot of revenue to the college**
- **Assist students ability to attend**
- **Contact with students during each term**
- **May have the most contact with students during university career except for professors**
- **Not given much status in the university community**

Financial Aid Offices

University Community

- **Acknowledge and support the job the FA office and staff performs**
- **Help develop message given students when contacted**
(differentiate between adult, distance learning, residential students)
- **Know the amount of revenue a FA office brings into the University**
- **Provide the appropriate staff and funding to allow the FA office to do its job efficiently and effectively**
- **Acknowledge different types of students receive FA such as adults and distance learning students**

Orientation

- **Bring students together in a relaxed atmosphere/begin the bonding process to the university and students**
- **Start to acculturate students to the university**
- **Help families understand what their son/daughter will experience at the university**
- **Acquaint students with administrative rules and regulations**
- **Help select and design academic programs**
- **Help students find information they need**

Orientation

Continued.....

University Community

- Faculty and staff serve as mentors
 - Have orientation groups meet at least once per term
 - Continuous all years in the university
-

How can you facilitate this with the adult & distance learning student?

Career Services

- **To receive FA a student must be in a degree program**
- **Are we making students choose programs too early in their university career**
- **Undecided students leave at a much greater rate than students with a defined goal**
- **Start the career exploration process early on and do not assume that a student knows what he/she wants to do simply since he/she chose a major.**
- **People change careers many times in their lifetime**

Career Services

Continued.....

University Community

- Hold career exploration days
 - Have career exploration part of orientation and/or on-going orientation
 - Have career exploration built into the curriculum
 - Use career exploration software
 - Majors can have speakers talk about their careers
 - Majors can hold informal student meetings
-

How can you facilitate this with the adult & distance learning student?

Faculty

University Community

- Faculty interaction with students outside the formal classroom setting is important for student success
 - Encourage and promote faculty/student interaction
 - Faculty mentors
 - Club advisors
 - Value faculty involvement in the evaluation/promotion system
-

How can you facilitate this with the adult & distance learning student?

College Mission Statement as the Guiding Principle

Seidman Says:

“Be true to your university mission. Do not just have it printed, have faculty and staff know it, and use it to guide the university in its interaction with students.”

“Do not recruit students to your campus who will not be successful unless you are willing to provide programs and services to help overcome deficiencies.”

“Philosophy does not have to follow finance. Finance should follow philosophy.”



"What does he know, and how long will he know it?"

The End

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